

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Milwaukee County Grounds

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	ii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
NEEDS ANALYSIS.....	1
DESCRIPTION.....	3
GOAL STATEMENT.....	4
PROPOSED MANAGEMENT.....	4
COST ESTIMATES.....	5
COST SUMMARY	5
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.....	6
ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS.....	6
SIGNIFICANCE OF CUMULATIVE EFFECTS	6
ALTERNATIVES.....	8
PROJECT FEASIBILITY	10
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS DECISION	12
ATTACHMENTS.....	13
Attachment #1 - Map of Milwaukee County Grounds	
Attachment #2 - Land Use Planning Committee Report	
Attachment #3 - SEWRPC Vegetation Survey	

Acknowledgments

Natural Resources Board

Trygve A. Solberg, Chair
James E. Tiefenthaler, Jr., Vice-Chair
Gerald M. O'Brien, Secretary
Herbert F. Behnke
Howard D. Poulson
Catherine L. Stepp
Stephen D. Willett

Department of Natural Resources

George E. Meyer
Darrell Bazzell
Franc Fennessy

Southeast Regional Office

Gloria McCutcheon, Regional Director
Don Tills, Regional Land Leader

Milwaukee County Grounds Team

Paul Heinen
Don Tills
Ron Novak
Jim Morrissey
Frank Trcka
Diane Greisinger

MILWAUKEE COUNTY GROUNDS NORTHEAST QUADRANT FEASIBILITY STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This feasibility study and environmental analysis examines a potential Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) lease/purchase or management of a portion of the Milwaukee County Grounds (County Grounds).

In June 1997, the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors responded to citizen concerns regarding development of the County Grounds and imposed a two-year moratorium on any actions other than planning for portions of the NE Quadrant. In response to the County Board, County Executive F. Thomas Ament appointed the Milwaukee County Grounds Land Use Planning Committee. Following the committee's work, the County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution on February 17, 2000, requesting the Department of Natural Resources to conduct a feasibility study of the entire area the Land Use Planning Committee looked at, except the area along Watertown Plank Road designated for commercial development.

In February, 2000, the Milwaukee County Board voted 24-0 to allow the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) to place two stormwater detention ponds in the NE Quadrant. It is assumed in this feasibility study that the ponds will be maintained in the areas shown on Attachment #1.

The entire study area looked at is approximately 235 acres owned by Milwaukee County. The area can be split into three distinct sections. The 110 acres North of Swan Boulevard and south of Underwood (North of Swan) and the 95 acres south of Swan Boulevard and north of Watertown Plank Road (South of Swan) and the 30 acres west of Highway 45 (West of Highway 45). Not only does the presence of a road, Swan Boulevard, split the NE Quadrant into two distinct areas (North of Swan/South of Swan), but historic uses of these two distinct areas have also shaped the natural landscape.

WHAT IS A FEASIBILITY STUDY?

A feasibility study is used to determine whether it is feasible for the DNR to establish, acquire, develop, and manage a new state property. The study must take into account the physical and biological environment and their capabilities, the view of the public and landowners adjoining the property and the availability of funding and staff to accomplish the project purpose adequately. Further, a feasibility study presents boundary alternatives, general land management strategies and insures integrated ecosystem management principles are considered.

NORTH OF SWAN

The Milwaukee County Grounds Land Use Planning Committee Report (Attachment #2) dated March, 1999, received extensive public input on the concept of creating a Forestry Awareness Center and forest demonstration area for outdoor forestry education. Public meetings included private residents, local clubs, local conservation organizations, area businesses and local governmental units. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission has expressed supportive views of this type of use for the grounds.

After taking all of the facts into account, we have determined that it would be feasible to acquire in some manner an area for a State Forest that would be in the 110 acres Milwaukee County currently owns bounded by Swan Boulevard, Highway 45 and Underwood Parkway. These lands consist of the former county nursery and a 53-acre tract of second growth hardwoods. The area would include a 48 acre detention pond, owned and built by MMSD, but managed by the DNR.

The DNR proposes to develop a Forestry Awareness Center and reforestation area to demonstrate forestry practices in the State of Wisconsin. This would be a cooperative venture with the forest industry, Milwaukee County and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

This proposal will provide an educational focus on the proper management of a second growth hardwood forest, reforestation efforts, and the uses of wood products in Wisconsin.

SOUTH OF SWAN

Along with the 47 acre detention pond, owned and built by MMSD, but managed by the DNR, we have determined that the most feasible use of the land south of Swan Boulevard is a mix of forest replantation, prairie restoration, woodlot management, trails and outdoor recreational areas. The DNR could be a partner with Milwaukee County, and potentially others, in developing a restoration plan for the area and helping put the plan into place. A conservation easement could be taken on any area that would need permanent protection for forestland, open space, prairie or recreational trails. Public lands continue to be in high demand in southeast Wisconsin and this use would protect these lands from more intensive development.

WEST OF HIGHWAY 45

The 30 acre parcel West of Highway 45 should remain in Milwaukee County ownership. It is an excellent Parkway corridor separated from the main portion of the Northeast quadrant by the Community Gardens parcel and Highway 45.

HOW IS A FEASIBILITY STUDY USED?

Following completion of the public review period for the draft feasibility study and environmental analysis, the DNR staff evaluates comments received and modifies the study contents accordingly. Various DNR program administrators review the document before it is sent to the Department Secretary for Natural Resources Board approval.

It is then presented to the Governor for final approval.

The Governor's approval of the feasibility study authorizes land acquisition. Basic land management activities including posting, parking lot development, road maintenance, weed control, and litter pickup are completed as lands are acquired. The DNR then develops a property master plan through a series of public meetings to determine the future management of the area.

FEASIBILITY STUDY

Introduction

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is authorized to acquire land for a variety of public purposes under ss. 23.09(2) and (10), 23.11, 23.14, and 27.01(2)(a) of the Wisconsin Statutes. Such lands are administered consistent with Natural Resources Board Policy established in Chapter NR 1 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

A Five-Year Land Acquisition Plan approved by the Natural Resources Board in May, 1996, identifies all new land acquisition projects expected to be subject to feasibility study through the year 2000. While the Milwaukee County Grounds are not specifically identified in this plan, portions do meet the land acquisition criteria established in section NR 1.40, Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Land acquisition funding for the DNR is provided by the General Land Acquisition portion of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. This fund provides over \$20 million each year for land acquisition under the Stewardship 2000 Program effective through 2010 for fee title and easement purchase of state parks and recreation areas, state trails, state forests, wildlife areas, fishery areas, wild rivers and other state projects.

The Forestry account also can be used to purchase lands, preserve and develop the forests of the state under Article VIII, Section 10, of the Wisconsin Constitution. The Forestry account currently provides approximately \$67 million per year for all forestry purposes statewide. The estimated closing balance at the end of the 2001-2003 biennium is approximately \$2 million. Milwaukee County contributes approximately \$7.6 million per year in property taxes to the state forestry account.

Acquisition /lease of land for the proposed Forestry Awareness Center, north of Swan Boulevard presents an opportunity to partner with other agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, and private Forest Industries to fund the development of an education center and area to educate both children and adults about sustainable forestry in Wisconsin. The area south of Swan Boulevard presents opportunities to reforest areas, protect acres of urban open space, reestablish native prairie lands, develop select woodlots, provide miles of trails for hiking, biking and dog walking and establish recreational areas for outdoor enthusiasts.

The DNR currently owns about 72,000 acres of public land scattered throughout the DNR's eight-county, Southeast Region. Milwaukee County currently owns 14,725 acres of parkland. This accounts for approximately 9 % of the county's total 163,600 gross acres. The only named state forest in Milwaukee County is Havenwoods (237 acres).

Needs Analysis

Recreational and educational needs in Wisconsin continue to grow with its population. While educational use of public lands is ranked as a medium-priority activity in the Wisconsin Statewide

Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, its number of participants are ranked ninth in the state greatly exceeding participant-levels for golf, baseball, softball, soccer, running/jogging, tennis, and canoeing.

Outdoor education objectives are ranked high as federal and state planning objectives. Open space needs are identified as critical quality-of-life factors and are ranked as high priority criteria in virtually all local, state and federal land use plans.

Economic benefits from natural resources are significant locally as well as statewide. The DNR publication *Preserving Wisconsin's Outdoor Legacy* indicates expenditures for Park and Forest day users was \$9,420,884 of which \$8,484,587 was spent outside of the park or forest. Wisconsin residents visiting state parks and forests participated in nature study approximately one-third of the total time visited. As an example, visitors to the Bong Recreation Area in Kenosha participate in nature study 37 % of the time. Educational activities in Wisconsin are projected to increase 31 % percent through the year 2004.

Human populations continue to grow in southeast Wisconsin. Annual recreational and outdoor education demands are increasing at a higher rate than the population, perhaps reflecting increased leisure time, desire for knowledge of the outdoors and mobility of Wisconsin residents as well as nonresidents who continue to find this state's resources highly attractive for vacationing.

In Milwaukee County, the majority of the land is classified residential or commercial. Only 9 % of the land is open space. Of that, 49 % is in parks and 35 % in woodlands. Although the county population growth rate is steady, its recreational land base (9 %) warrants some expansion. The Milwaukee County Open Space Plan identifies 9,726 acres (6 %) of the county as "primary environmental corridors" to be preserved in essentially natural open space for resource protection and outdoor recreation purposes. The county currently owns 5,784 acres or 59 % of the total area of primary environmental corridors in Milwaukee County.

Land use and development have eliminated or dramatically altered natural lands in Milwaukee County. Natural communities have either disappeared completely or have been fragmented to a point where maintaining natural areas is nearly impossible. The Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) has identified 41 acres of the Milwaukee County Grounds as a natural area of local significance (Wil-O-Way Woods - NA-3) that should be protected. Most of the proposed state forest site (excluding the former county nursery) warrants some degree of protection according to SEWRPC's recommendations dated April 14, 1997.

A variety of state, regional and local planning reports identify the need for more public recreational land in Southeast Wisconsin. *The Wisconsin Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2000-2005* identifies the southeast part of the state as having the highest proportion of adults (38.8%) participating in outdoor recreation. Several SEWRPC reports identify shortages in most public recreational activities and places strong emphasis on protecting and restoring natural areas.

Description

The property is located in southeast Wisconsin, in the western portion of Milwaukee County. More specifically it is located north of Watertown Plank Road, bordered on the east and north by Underwood Parkway and the west by Highway 45. The property is within the City of Wauwatosa and a one and one-half hour drive of Madison and Chicago as well as within this travel period for more than 50% of Wisconsin's population.

The property is located on a limestone ridge, which extends along Lake Michigan from Racine to Door County. The previous actions of the glacier 13,000 years ago gave southeast Wisconsin a diverse landscape. Most of the soils in the proposed state forest area are various silt looms (i.e. Osaka Silt Loam, Fox Silt Loam etc.).

Vegetative cover over most of the area north of Swan Boulevard and west of Highway 45 is second growth, southern dry-medic hardwoods, grassland and scattered abandoned nursery stock. The area has not been used recently for any specified purpose except for the former nursery. The woodlot on the proposed state forest area contains white poplar, butternut, black walnut, shagbark & yellow-bud hickory, ironwood, American beech, oak, American and red elm, sugar maple, box elder, basswood, and white and green ash. The understudy contains a mixture of saplings of the tree species mentioned along with prickly ash, chokecherry, black cherry, apple, hawthorn, sumac, honeysuckle, and several species of forbs and domestic grasses.

The area South of Swan Boulevard is comprised of eleven plant communities with vegetation that reflects its past intensive agricultural land use (Attachment 3 – Vegetation survey of the Milwaukee County Grounds done by the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission). In general the vegetation consists mainly of cultivated garden plots, weedy forbs and grasses, small isolated wood patches and weedy native plants. There is a 7/10 acre wetland stand, a number of roads and pathways, and a MMSD building accessing the deep tunnel structure.

No endangered or threatened plants are known to be found within the proposed project.

Wildlife found in the vicinity is typical for a metropolitan area in Wisconsin. Many species of wildlife inhabit the area. Mammals include white-tailed deer, woodchuck, gray squirrel, cottontail rabbit, raccoon, striped skunk, opossum, and several other species of small mammals.

Some birds typical of the area include red-tailed hawk, American goldfinch, house finch, killdeer, American robin, cardinal, song sparrow, English sparrow, downy woodpecker, and several other species of songbirds.

There are four small designated wetlands within the proposed project boundary, which are one acre or less in size. The Menomonee River flows through the area north of Underwood Parkway and the proposed project boundary.

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) will be using approximately 95 acres inside the area to construct retention ponds to alleviate flooding problems along the Menomonee River. The

bottom of the ponds, the areas that will remain wet, may cover up to 45 acres and will be used to develop a demonstration wetland area. The MMSD will be responsible for designing and building the retention ponds in coordination with the DNR who will manage the shoreland areas surrounding them.

Goal Statement

The proposed goal is for the DNR to purchase/lease the land from Milwaukee County to develop an outdoor education area featuring a Forestry Awareness Center, sawmill, forestry demonstration areas and reforestation of selected Wisconsin native tree species. These uses would be located in an urban area, accessible by mass transit and major highways, providing easy regional utilization. Further, the DNR will manage the detention ponds as wetland complexes and help to replant forest and prairie areas as well as help to design trails and pathways to ensure public access and recreational opportunities.

A special management effort will be extended by the Department of Natural Resources to insure all of its general management activities are understood by all individuals enjoying the various natural resources on the Milwaukee County Grounds.

Proposed Management

After purchase/lease, the state forest wooded areas North of Swan would be managed as a demonstration forest and the open areas would be reforested to show what other varieties of cover exist in Wisconsin.

Public uses would include outdoor education with an emphasis on forestry awareness as well as other compatible forms of nature-based recreation. The specific forms of recreation to be provided and the types of development required are established through a property master plan on a timetable developed by the DNR in conjunction with planning for other state-owned properties.

South of Swan, the DNR would manage or lease the areas around the detention pond. The DNR could also replant acreage with trees planted by local school groups over a period of years. The newly forested acreage could be used as an outdoor teaching area allowing students to see how trees are planted, how they grow and are nurtured, and finally how a forest can be reestablished over time.

DNR could also partner with public and private groups to help replant prairie in the area and assist in planning trails and interpretive pathways throughout the area South of Swan.

The Forestry Awareness Center could be a meeting place, provide educational and interpretive opportunities and help to coordinate projects both north and south of Swan Boulevard. The inter-relationships among forests, wetlands and prairies in the northeast quadrant could be highlighted at the Center.

Cost Estimates

The Department of Natural Resources has asked for \$400,000 in the 2001-2003 Wisconsin Biennial Budget to begin the initial planning and design for the Forestry Awareness Center. The money will be used to contract with a company that can help solicit input and support from the forest industry to help pay for and support the Center.

Land acquisition/lease payments to the county would be for acquisition for a building site and annual lease payments for the remainder of the acreage. Funding could come from the Stewardship 2000 program, forestry fund and the forest industry. The acquisition cost for the lands for the improvements are estimated at approximately \$1 million and the lease costs for the remainder of the lands are estimated at approximately \$300,000 dollars per year, depending upon the total acres.

The property, which is currently owned by the county, generates no tax income for Milwaukee County. However, an acquisition by the DNR would generate some income from a payment in lieu of property taxes. Those payments are estimated at \$32,000.00 per year. (\$32.16/\$1,000.)

Development costs including, Forestry Awareness Center, sawmill, road, parking lots, reforestation and signage are unknown at this time. The private forest industry is expected to contribute to the development costs of this project and the department is using the \$400,000 budget request to more fully develop the actual costs and the role of its partners.

Maintenance including routine building maintenance, litter pickup, weed control, and other routine activities would cost the DNR about \$15,000 per year. Other maintenance costs would be negotiated with Milwaukee County in the lease agreement.

Staffing would be provided by the DNR's forestry program and would involve one forestry specialist and one maintenance technician stationed at the site. An additional need for 1,000 hours of a temporary (limited term) position costing approximately \$20,000 per year also is warranted for this property.

There is no state cost for technical services support from the forest industry.

Cost Summary (*depending upon the total acres)

Land Acquisition	\$1 million*
Land Lease Costs	\$300,000/yr.*
Development	\$????(partnership or DNR costs)
Forest Replantation Costs	\$300.00/acre
Maintenance	\$15,000/yr.
Staff - permanent	2 FTE/or contract employees. (forest interpreter, maintenance technician)
- temporary	1 LTE or contract employee (laborer helper)

Public Involvement

Letters and personal contacts were used to inform local officials to enable them to participate in the Milwaukee County Grounds Land Use Planning Committee recommendations. News media announcements and letters were used to notify a broader mix of public participants and legislators for the public meetings held from November 1997 through September 1998. Public comments were evaluated by the planning committee to produce a recommendation for the uses of the Milwaukee County Grounds. They held 11 meetings and 2 public hearings. The results are shown in the appendix. Various Milwaukee County Board Committees and the full County Board have also held meetings and hearings on recommendations.

Environmental Effects and Their Significance

The environmental impacts associated with land acquisition and management by the DNR are generally positive. State ownership or lease of the land and partnering with others to restore prairie and replant forest assures natural habitat restoration, protection of unique plant and wildlife communities and the opportunity for the public to participate in a variety of outdoor recreational activities. Improvements to the landscape would also enhance adjoining lands. Special efforts are typically extended by the DNR to insure management activities are not detrimental.

The restoration of natural forest communities including a wetland complex will provide life requisites for a variety of species. Populations of waterfowl may inhabit the wetland area .

Some management activities would disturb soils and temporarily increase the potential for erosion and runoff into waterways. The use of “best management practices” can minimize these effects limiting the time period for soil disturbance and using the appropriate erosion control practices.

The use of herbicides as vegetative control tools can generate some public concern. Herbicides would only be used when necessary and always applied by properly trained personnel in accordance with the herbicide's label for safe application.

Significance of Cumulative Effects

With the acquisition/lease of these lands by the DNR, and through partnering efforts with local units of government, these lands would be protected from more intensive uses in the future. For example, the adjacent Milwaukee Regional Medical Center and Milwaukee County Research Park are already intensely developed. Preservation and sound management of these lands would promote the natural resource aesthetics of this area and improve the water quality in Underwood Creek. Additional projects of this type would preserve and improve forest habitat as well as protecting natural aesthetics which contribute directly to the quality of life.

This project stimulates a cooperative effort between local, state and federal levels of government as well as support from private organizations, private industry, and involved citizens. This effort is extremely beneficial, both socially and politically. This cooperative spirit also improves governmental efficiency and cost effectiveness.

The DNR policy to establish and maintain good relationships with landowners adjoining state-owned lands through respectful treatment, regular contact and prompt resolution of complaints would create positive views of DNR personnel and the agency as well as minimizing problems associated with public land management.

The purchase/lease of land by the state is typically perceived as having a negative impact on the local tax base. Some believe this state ownership increases the local taxes. Since this entire area is county owned land, it does not generate any tax revenue at this time. The DNR, in fact, makes payments in lieu of taxes on DNR acquired lands. This typically offsets any reduction in actual tax payments. Further, the DNR requires few if any local government services for its lands. Several independent tax studies have concluded not only is there little or no impact on the local tax base, but often the public land itself generates dollars for local businesses.

Significance of Risk

There is little or no risk associated with the proposed purchase/lease of the lands by the DNR or its subsequent management. However, there is a distinct risk that if the lands were not acquired by the DNR, or managed in partnership with Milwaukee County, imminent future development or commercial uses would destroy or negatively impact the natural features of these lands. Recreational opportunities for the public would be maintained under the DNR's ownership. The county could retain ownership, but may have difficulty maintaining present use due to increasing demand from the private sector to develop some, or all, of the site.

Archaeological and historic sites, while afforded some protection by state and federal laws are more apt to be at risk if the lands were not acquired by the DNR. The chance for a private individual or business to harm or destroy this type of resource inadvertently is extremely great because most people are not familiar with the law or the importance of these types of sites.

The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee in their design report process identified a need for additional study of existing conditions on the Milwaukee County Grounds. Their report expressed concerns over 13 building demolition sites, the presence of two landfills, (one of which is described as accepting pesticides and herbicides), other unidentified disturbed sites, and two cemeteries. Other potential concerns include an incinerator, a possible coal ash landfill, asbestos-containing steam tunnels running between building sites, and the presence of lead and arsenic at the old nursery.

Significance of Precedent

The DNR routinely partners with local municipalities in re-establishing a native vegetation community and in providing expertise to restore areas into a more natural setting. The areas south of Swan Boulevard may provide this opportunity.

Although not common, the acquisition/lease of County lands north of Swan is not precedent setting. The DNR typically purchases private lands statewide and within the region. However, it is common for the Department to partner with other entities on land protection, maintenance and management activities.

Purchase or lease of County lands helps to ensure that these lands remain free of development into the future.

Significance of Controversy Over Environmental Effects

Milwaukee County Grounds Land Use Planning Committee was appointed by County Executive F. Thomas Ament in October 1997 to develop recommendations for the development and use of the Milwaukee County Grounds. A participatory planning process with public involvement was utilized to develop the recommendations. From November 1997 through March 1999 several committee and public meetings were held to obtain public input for the development and use of the Milwaukee County Grounds. Local officials and legislators have either indicated support for the project or are interested in the DNR land purchase/lease proposal. Many residents and various recreational organizations have also expressed support for the recommendations for the Milwaukee County Grounds as proposed by the Land Use Planning Committee.

Some public controversy has surfaced over state ownership in general. It ranges from a few individuals not wanting any DNR involvement at all to other citizens wanting the DNR to purchase and manage the whole northeast quadrant of the Milwaukee County Grounds. The presence of the MMSD stormwater ponds has also generated controversy. Comments range from not wanting any water retention ponds on the Milwaukee County Grounds to wanting a significantly smaller size than is currently proposed. The concepts of outdoor education, recreational use of public lands, preservation of natural open space and forestry values have been almost unanimously supported. Public comments and agency responses from these meetings are presented in the attached copy of the Milwaukee County Grounds Land Use Planning Committee Report. (Attachment #3)

Alternatives

1. No Action

Under this alternative, the area would likely remain in county ownership with a portion of the old nursery and area south of Swan Boulevard used by MMSD for the proposed water retention ponds. Since there would be no DNR acquisition/lease, the expenditure of Forestry or Stewardship funds would either be reduced substantially or eliminated.

Continued public recreational opportunities and natural resources preservation of this area of the Milwaukee County Grounds would likely persist. However, the potential exists for some or all of these lands to be converted to another use, sold, or leased to others by Milwaukee County.

2. Minimum State Ownership

It is conceivable that a minimum level of state ownership could provide for the development of a Forestry Awareness Center and accommodate a reasonable level of public recreation. The purchase/lease of 60 acres North of Swan is considered the absolute minimum level necessary for this alternative to be feasible.

With this alternative, outdoor education benefits would be limited to activities in and immediately around the Forestry Awareness Center. This would not provide for the outdoor reforestation plots and forestry demonstration areas. Assuming that the DNR would also help replant forest and prairie on some land South of Swan there could still be some recreational use. Public recreational use would be provided at modest levels, but limited ownership would likely cause public use to reach capacity over a short period of time.

This alternative would reduce costs for purchase, leasing and maintenance. Purchase costs would be approximately \$500,000. Leasing costs would be about \$150,000/year. Maintenance is estimated at about \$8,000 per year.

3. Expanded State Ownership

This alternative encompasses about 235 acres and would provide an optimal state level of participation in outdoor education, protection, reforestation, and demonstration opportunities as well as expanded recreational use. More state ownership would reduce the risk of more intensive development and improve the DNR's outdoor education opportunities. Costs can be expected to increase under this alternative. Leasing costs could exceed \$ 3 million/year. This alternative would provide an opportunity to develop a larger area for a state forest, including land South of Swan and West of Highway 45.

This alternative would reestablish native communities and would purchase land for a Forestry Awareness Center consistent with agency outdoor education, land protection and recreational objectives. It would make use of the current DNR Forestry and Steward accounts.

Under this alternative the State would purchase in some manner an area for a State Forest that would be in the 110 acres Milwaukee County currently owns bounded by Swan Boulevard, Highway 45 and Underwood Parkway. These lands consist of the former county nursery and a 53 acre tract of second growth hardwoods. The area would include a 48 acre detention pond, owned and built by MMSD, but managed by the DNR. The DNR proposes to develop a Forestry Awareness Center and reforestation area to demonstrate forestry practices in the State of Wisconsin. This would be a cooperative venture with the forest industry, Milwaukee County and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

The land South of Swan Boulevard would be purchased or leased and developed into a mix of forest replantation, plant restoration, woodlot management, trails and outdoor recreational areas. The DNR would develop a restoration plan for the area and put the plan into place.

Under this alternative the 30 acre parcel west of Highway 45 would also be purchased or leased by the DNR from Milwaukee County. It is an excellent Parkway Corridor separated from the main portion of the northeast quadrant by the proposed Community Garden Parcel and Highway 45.

4. Purchase/lease 110 Acres North of Swan Boulevard and Partnering South of Swan Blvd

This alternative is a combination of partnering to reestablish native communities and land purchase for a Forestry Awareness Center consistent with agency outdoor education, land protection and recreational objectives. It would make use of the current DNR Forestry and STEWARD accounts.

Under this alternative the State would purchase in some manner an area for a State Forest that would be in the 110 acres Milwaukee County currently owns bounded by Swan Boulevard, Highway 45 and Underwood Parkway. These lands consist of the former county nursery and a 53-acre tract of second growth hardwoods. The area would include a 48 acre detention pond, owned and built by MMSD, but managed by the DNR.

The DNR proposes to develop a Forestry Awareness Center and reforestation area to demonstrate forestry practices in the State of Wisconsin. This would be a cooperative venture with the forest industry, Milwaukee County and the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. The land south of Swan Boulevard would be purchased and developed into a mix of forest replantation, prairie restoration, woodlot management, trails and outdoor recreational areas. The DNR would be a partner with Milwaukee County, and potentially others, in developing a restoration plan for the area and helping put the plan into place. Milwaukee County should continue to own and manage the land for these purposes although a conservation easement could be taken on the area that would be reforested.

Under this alternative the 30 acre parcel West of Highway 45 should remain in Milwaukee County ownership.

5. Other Public/Private Partnerships

This alternative requires local governmental units, nonprofit organizations, and private industry or a combination of interested partners, to provide land control and development of the proposed project as a consortium. These entities are eligible for cost sharing grants for land acquisition and development under the state's Stewardship Program.

Typically, land purchases coupled with regular maintenance commitments are not very attractive for local sponsorship unless some group or individual comes forward to coordinate the many activities required for such a project. Additionally, grant funds require competition with other worthy statewide projects, so cost sharing funds are not guaranteed.

This alternative, if funding could be secured, would provide the same outdoor education benefits and site amenities as proposed through state ownership. The Governor's Council on Forestry and the forest industry could participate in paying for the same programs as they would if the project was state-owned. However, establishing this common interest, coordinating the various partnerships, enlisting public participation, developing plans, raising adequate capital and applying for funding could take several years to complete. As such, time may become a critical consideration for the success of this alternative.

Project Feasibility

Based upon the information available the Department has concluded that a proposed state forest located north of Swan Boulevard is feasible from the standpoint of legal authority, ecological soundness, public support, and availability of initial funding. The area south of Swan Boulevard could be replanted in forest and restored to a more native vegetation community through a partnership group consisting of

the DNR, Milwaukee County and other interested private/public groups. The DNR could provide this partnership with any technical assistance for maintenance and long term management of this area, if requested.

The cooperation and support of Milwaukee County, City of Wauwatosa, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District and the private forest industry is essential in the success of this project.

(This decision is not final until certified by the appropriate DNR authority)

1. EIS process not required.....(X)
 Analysis of the expected impacts of this proposal is of sufficient scope and detail to conclude that this is not a major action, which would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. In my opinion, therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required prior to final action by the Department on this project.

2. Major action requiring the full EIS process.....()
The proposal is of such magnitude and complexity with such considerable and important impacts on the quality of the human environment that it constitutes a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Evaluator's Signature _____ Date Signed _____
/s/ James Morrissey

Regional Director _____ Date Signed _____
/s/ Gloria McCutcheon

Copy of news release or other public notice attached? () Yes () No
 Number of responses to the notice? _____
 Public response log attached? () Yes () No

Regional Environmental Impact Coordinator Signature _____ Date Signed _____
/s/ Mike Thompson

If you believe that you have a right to challenge this decision, you should know that Wisconsin law and administrative rules establish time periods within which requests to review Department decisions must be filed.

For judicial review of a decision pursuant to s. 227.52 and 227.53, Stats., you have 30 days after the decision is mailed or otherwise served by the Department to file your petition with the appropriate circuit court and serve the petition on the Department. Such a petition for judicial review shall name the Department of Natural Resources as the respondent.

To request a contested case hearing pursuant to s. 227.42, you have 30 days after the decision is mailed or otherwise served by the Department to serve a petition for hearing on the Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources. The filing of a request for a contested case hearing is not a prerequisite for judicial review and does not extend the 30-day period for filing a petition for judicial review.

12